

KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE / A CLASS ACT

DECEMBER 10TH, 2013

**ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S VAL-KILL CELEBRATES
65 YEARS OF THE
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
WITH STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**



Shaker Jr/Sr High School Students, Latham , NY



Bard College Students,
Staatsburg, NY



Red Hook High School Students,
Red Hook, NY

C2A / Keep the Dream Alive / A Class Act

Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill celebrates Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Student Involvement

December 10th, 2013 marked the 65th anniversary of the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The anniversary of the UDHR, seen by most historians as Eleanor Roosevelt's greatest achievement, was observed at her Val-Kill Home with a visit from President of Ghana John Mahama on Dec. 9th, followed on Dec. 10th by a program for several student groups presented by Ghana's Minister for Gender, Children, and Social Protection, Nana Oye Litheir.

The head-of-state's visit was arranged through a partnership between the Bard College Center for Civic Engagement and NPS park partner Honoring Eleanor Roosevelt. Originally scheduled for Dec. 10th, President Mahama visited a day early to accommodate his return to Africa for Nelson Mandela's memorial services. Students from Bard College, Red Hook High School and the Shaker Junior/ Senior High School (the park adopted class of 2016), visited the site and attended Nana Oye Litheir's talk about her role as the Gender, Children and Social Protection Minister of Ghana.

The Minister's talk served to showcase the UDHR in action for participating students, and provided a meaningful joining of Call to Action goals 9 and 15 – *Keep the Dream Alive and A Class Act*.



Sarah Olson— Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS Superintendent



Ghana's Minister for Gender, Children, and Social Protection, Nana Oye Litheir.



Uri Pernna—Executive Director of Honoring Eleanor Roosevelt, now known as Eleanor Roosevelt at Val-Kill Partnerships



Minister Litheir chatted with the students.



President Mahama of Ghana Pre-recording of speech for students



Minister Litheir greeted and thanked every student.



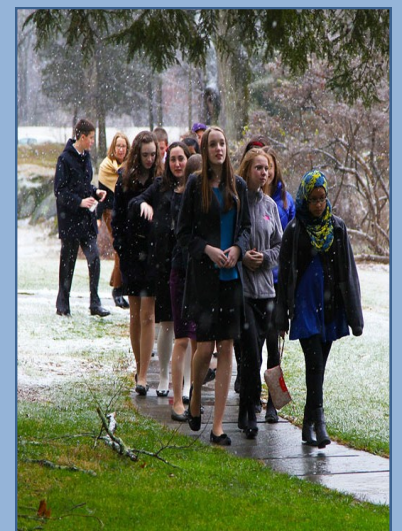
Manuela Roosevelt Giving speech for the celebration.



Student's present Minister Litheir with a gift of a teapot set to represent Eleanor Roosevelt's work on human rights and peace.



Student's tour Mrs. Roosevelt's home.



Welcoming Remarks, President Mahama At Val-Kill, December 10, 2013

by Manuela Roosevelt

On behalf of the Roosevelt family and of honoring Eleanor Roosevelt, I welcome the Honorable Nana Lithur, Dear Ambassadors and Consul, in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the signature of the declaration of Human Rights.

Human rights represent one of the deepest longings for freedom. The human rights arena is where power and conscience meet, and will be meeting until our world can finally achieve greater equanimity for all, and the dream that Eleanor Roosevelt dreamt here at Val-Kill is made reality.

The fight for human rights remains an unfinished business. What is right is a question all too often only relevant among equals in power, disenfranchising still too many. All of us here, I know, are active and passionate participants in changing this dictum once and for all.

Eleanor Roosevelt cared deeply about our youth:

“Young people,” she said. “are the rock upon which I stand.” And helping young people understand how to build a meaningful future for the common good, for something greater than themselves, was one of her most important missions.

In a birthday reflection in a 1946 “My Day” column she wrote:

“I think older people have a responsibility to help young people to assume more and more of the management of the world in which they live. Every young person has a right to a certain period in life in which they feel that someone else will take the major responsibility of directing not only their lives, but the surrounding world situation. Then there comes a period when, Willy-Nilly, the responsibility must be on their young but mature shoulders.”

Today we need our young to understand that the declaration of human rights is a compass that helps us navigate through turbulence and storms that arise when human rights are compromised.

We still need to understand that the Declaration is meant to be read as a whole: It enshrines individual liberty within a context of social responsibility. It is not meant and was never meant to be a menu from which governments pick and choose according to taste. It is common standard, that can be brought to life, and as Eleanor said, It is “A bridge upon which we can meet and talk.”